

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 12469 211510Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 081329 /43

R 211441Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

SECSTATE WASHDC 2089

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 12469

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CASC, PINS, ET
SUBJ: AMCIT TRAVEL TO NORTHERN ETHIOPIA

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 12247, B. ADDIS ABABA 12302,
C. NAIROBI 14131 (ALL NOTAL)

1. ON SURFACE, GONDAR HAS QUIETED DOWN SINCE INCIDENT
REPORTED REFTEL B. BRITISH CONSUL VISITED CITY DEC
16-18 PRIMARILY TO LOOK INTO REPORTED KIDNAPPINGS, AND
REPORTED CITY AS BASICALLY CALM. HE RECOMMENDED HOWEVER
THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD TOURISTS ATTEMPT TO
TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF CITY.

2. WE NONETHELESS PREFER TO ERR ON SIDE OF CAUTION.
RELIABLE SOURCE TOLD CHARGE THAT IN HIS OPINION THERE
IS STILL UNDERCURRENT OF TENSION IN CITY THAT COULD
LEAD TO FRESH OUTBREAK SUCH AS OCCURRED DEC 8, AND WE
CONTINUE RECEIVE OCCASIONAL REPORTS OF TROUBLE AROUND
GONDAR TO NORTH, WEST AND NORTHEAST PRESUMABLY CAUSED
BY ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION (EDU) POSSIBLY TOGETHER
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WITH ELEMENTS OF ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY
(EPRP) AND ITS MILITARY WING, EPRA. AREA IS GENERALLY
CONSIDERED EDU STRONGHOLD.

3. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, BELIEVE IT BETTER TO DISSUADE
YOUR LADIES FROM MAKING THEIR CHRISTMAS TRIP AND TO

WAIT FOR BETTER DAY IF THIS NOT ALREADY DONE. WOULD
HOPE YOU COULD DO IT SIMPLY ON BASIS OF DEC 8 INCIDENT
PLUS WHATEVER NAIROBI PRESS HAS REPORTED, AND WITHOUT
REFERENCE TO TROUBLE AROUND GONDAR WHICH HAS NOT BEEN
PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED BY ETHIOPIANS. RE OTHER NORTHERN
ETHIOPIAN TOURIST CITIES, PARTICULARLY AXUM AND MAKALE,
WE DO PERMIT OUR OWN PEOPLE TO GO THERE, BUT BOTH
ARE IN TROUBLE AREAS AND WE DO NOT PERMIT THEM TO LEAVE
EITHER CITY. WE WOULD VIEW VISIT TO EITHER PLACE BY
LARGE GROUP OF AMERICAN TOURISTS WITH SOME MISGIVINGS.

4. ETHIOPIAN TOURIST AGENCY (ETO) WAS PROBABLY TELLING
YOU LITERAL TRUTH IN SAYING TOURISTS CAN VISIT ASMARA.
SOME ACTUALLY DO. UNFORTUNATELY THERE IS NOW NOTHING
TO SEE OR DO THERE, NO ONE IS PERMITTED OUT OF THE
CITY, AND THERE IS A DUSK-TO-DAWN CURFEW. NEEDLESS
TO SAY, REGARDLESS OF ETO, WE STRONGLY ATTEMPT DIS-
COURAGE ANY AMERICAN FROM VISITING CITY EXCEPT ON
OFFICIAL BUSINESS EVEN IF IT APPEARS EPMG WILL ALLOW
THEM TO BOARD FLIGHT TO ASMARA.
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